

THAT WHICH IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A communications system comprising:
a database for storing problem magnitudes relating to failed attempts at accessing servers using connection engines; and
an intelligent routing engine operative with the database for querying the database and delaying any further attempts at accessing the server when the problem magnitude exceeds a predetermined threshold.
2. A communications system according to Claim 1, wherein said intelligent routing engine is operative for delaying any reattempts at accessing a server until a problem magnitude returns to below a predetermined threshold.
3. A communications system according to Claim 2, wherein any delay in reattempting access to the server is a function of a preset rate of decay of a problem magnitude.
4. A communications system according to Claim 1, wherein said database includes data relating to a current problem magnitude for a failed access to a server that is added to a current exponentially decayed entry in the database.
5. A communications system according to Claim 1, wherein said database includes data relating to a problem magnitude versus time for any server and connection engine pair.

6. A communications system according to Claim 1, wherein a problem magnitude is assigned for an error based on network failures.

7. A communications system according to Claim 1, wherein a problem magnitude is assigned for an error based on failures unrelated to a network failure.

8. A communications system according to Claim 7, wherein any failures unrelated to a network failure include an incorrect password and/or poorly formed request.

9. A communications system according to Claim 1, wherein said intelligent routing engine comprises a proxy server.

10. A communications system according to Claim 1, wherein said intelligent routing engine is operative for accessing a server using a POP, IMAP or httpmail protocol.

11. A communications system comprising:
a plurality of connection engines that can be used by a client for accessing a server of a server on an Internet Protocol (IP) network, wherein said connection engines are distributed among a plurality of subnets and/or IP addresses;

a database for storing a problem magnitude versus time relating to a particular connection engine and server after attempts had been made to access servers using the connection engines and problem magnitudes had been assigned to failures in accessing the servers; and

an intelligent routing engine operative with the database for selecting a connection engine with minimum problems when a particular server is to be accessed based on stored data within the database.

12. A communications system according to Claim 11; wherein said intelligent routing engine is operative for delaying any reattempts at accessing a server until a problem magnitude returns to below a predetermined threshold.

13. A communications system according to Claim 12, wherein any delay in reattempting access to a server is a function of a preset rate of decay of a problem magnitude.

14. A communications system according to Claim 11, wherein said database includes data relating to a current problem magnitude for a failed access to a server that is added to a current exponentially decayed entry in the database.

15. A communications system according to Claim 11, wherein said database includes data relating to a problem magnitude versus time for any server and connection engine pair.

16. A communications system according to Claim 11, wherein a problem magnitude is assigned for an error based on network failures.

17. A communications system according to Claim 11, wherein a problem magnitude is assigned for an error based on failures unrelated to a network failure.

18. A communications system according to Claim 17, wherein any failures unrelated to a network failure include an incorrect password and/or poorly formed request.

19. A communications system according to Claim 11, wherein said intelligent routing engine comprises a proxy server.

20. A communications system according to Claim 11, wherein said intelligent routing engine is operative for accessing the server using POP, IMAP or httpmail protocol.

21. A method of accessing a server of a server on an Internet Protocol (IP) network comprising the steps of:

attempting access to a server using a first connection engine;

assigning a problem magnitude if the attempt at accessing the server has failed; and

delaying any further attempts at accessing the server when the problem magnitude exceeds a predetermined threshold.

22. A method according to Claim 21, and further comprising the step of delaying any reattempts at accessing the server until the problem magnitude returns to below a predetermined threshold.

23. A method according to Claim 22, wherein the delay in reattempting access to the server is a

function of a preset rate of decay of the problem magnitude.

24. A method according to Claim 21, and further comprising the step of maintaining a database of failed attempts at accessing the server.

25. A method according to Claim 24, wherein a current problem magnitude for a failed access to a server is added to a current exponentially decayed entry in the database along with a time stamp.

26. A method according to Claim 24, and further comprising the step of storing in the database the problem magnitude versus time for any server and connection engine pair.

27. A method according to Claim 24, and further comprising the step of tracking the magnitude of failure based on the problem magnitude of failed attempts stored within the database.

28. A method according to Claim 21, and further comprising the step of assigning a problem magnitude for an error based on network failures.

29. A method according to Claim 21, and further comprising the step of assigning a problem magnitude for an error based on failures unrelated to a network failure.

30. A method according to Claim 29, wherein a failure unrelated to a network failure includes an incorrect password and/or poorly formed request.

31. A method according to Claim 21, and further comprising the step of making a service request to the connection engine using a proxy engine.

32. A method according to Claim 31, and further comprising the step of making a service request using a Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) or Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP).

33. A method according to Claim 31, and further comprising the step of attempting access to a server using a POP, IMAP, or httpmail protocol.

34. A method according to Claim 21, and further comprising the step of choosing a second connection engine and attempting access to the server after failing access with the first connection engine.

35. A method of accessing a server of a server on an Internet Protocol (IP) network comprising the steps of:

- distributing connection engines over multiple subnets and/or multiple IP addresses;

- attempting access to servers using the connection engines;

- assigning problem magnitudes to failures in accessing any servers;

- storing the problem magnitude versus time relating to a particular connection engine and server within a database; and

- choosing a connection engine having minimum problems when a particular server is to be accessed based on the data stored within the database.

36. A method according to Claim 35, and further comprising the step of distributing the connection engines over multiple servers.

37. A method according to Claim 35, wherein a current problem magnitude for a failed access to a server is added to a current exponentially decayed entry in the database along with a time stamp.

38. A method according to Claim 35, and further comprising the step of terminating any further attempts at accessing a server using a first connection engine if a problem magnitude exceeds a predetermined threshold.

39. A method according to Claim 38, and further comprising the step of delaying any reattempts at accessing the server until a problem magnitude returns to below a predetermined threshold.

40. A method according to Claim 39, wherein the delay in reattempting access to the server is a function of a preset rate of decay of the problem magnitude.

41. A method according to Claim 35, and further comprising the step of assigning a problem magnitude for an error based on network failures.

42. A method according to Claim 35, and further comprising the step of assigning a problem magnitude for an error based on failures unrelated to a network failure.

43. A method according to Claim 42, wherein a failure unrelated to a network failure includes an incorrect password and/or poorly formed request.

44. A method according to Claim 35, and further comprising the step of making a service request to a connection engine using a proxy engine.

45. A method according to Claim 44, and further comprising the step of making a service request using a Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) or Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP).

46. A method according to Claim 44, and further comprising the step of attempting access to the server using POP, IMAP, or httpmail protocol.

47. A method according to Claim 35, and further comprising the step of choosing a second connection engine and attempting access to the server after attempting access to the server with the first connection engine has failed.